



U.S. Army
Army Corps of Engineers

District Tides

NORFOLK DISTRICT

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***Oyster
Success!***

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new wall***

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pays a visit***

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From the Cover



District Oceanographer Dave Schulte displays a cluster of oysters which were growing on the district's reefs in the Great Wicomico River. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

District Tides

Commander's Corner

Have you ever attended an orchestra performance? Before the concert, you'll see the various musicians warming up... a cacophony of harsh, discordant sounds. Some instruments stand out more than others, yet all seeming to go in different directions. At first it sounds like noise. Then the conductor walks onto the stage. Immediately everyone sits up straight. The conductor steps onto the riser, taps his/her baton on the music stand... and everyone comes to attention. At a precise moment the conductor raises the baton and then the music starts. What had been noise a few seconds earlier has become a beautiful melody. No single instrument dominates any other; each is in harmony with the others.

In Norfolk District, we need this type of teamwork and synchronization to address our heavy workload and to achieve excellence across our eight lines of operations. Our team extends well beyond our employees. It includes our contractors, our stakeholders, our partners and our customers/applicants. Everyone should be extremely proud of our team's accomplishments to date, as we move our multi-billion dollar program forward to support our brave men and women in uniform, provide protection of life and property from disasters, and serve as stewards of the environment across the Commonwealth.

At times it may appear we do not have enough time, money or manpower to accomplish our demanding and exciting program. However, I am confident, as you should be, that through individual, innovative thoughts and proactive team actions, we can and will overcome any perceived or actual resource limitations.

One initiative that came out of our visioning efforts to address potential manpower shortfalls is to take a systems approach to Recruiting (project, advertise & in-brief), Sustaining (mentor, develop, train, quality of life & reward) and Retiring (project, recognize & out-brief) our workforce. This holistic approach will ensure we have the necessary personnel and core

competencies to complete our missions while caring for our people. Additionally we will continue to move forward on a number of our quality of life/workplace initiatives--in particular, the re-design of our entrance gate and doing what we can, as money becomes available, to improve the interior of our work facilities. Again another visioning initiative.

As we look to the future, we just completed our Congressional visits and the Third Hampton Roads Navigation Summit Partnership. Our relationships remain strong and it is clear that our capability to execute our diverse Civil Works programs is much greater than our just-released Fiscal Year 2009 Civil Works budget would lead one to believe. I am confident that, through our collaboration, communication and cooperative relationships, we will be able to execute at about the same level as we have in recent years. We will continue to communicate the need to "buy down risk" in the areas of flood damage reduction, navigation, water supply/quality and in our Formerly Used Defense Site program.

Our BRAC and Military Construction (MILCON) program continues to amaze me as I see dirt being moved, concrete being poured and steel erected each and every day. Our Centers Of Standardization team achieved a significant milestone by awarding our first, and perhaps the largest, dining facility at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Our regulatory program is challenged with a new web-based database system, the Rapponos ruling and working through some very difficult projects. The team continues to excel while providing the Commonwealth and Nation with a valuable service. Finally, our Real Estate office continues its great effort in managing two high visibility, national Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) and Privatized Army Lodging (PAL) programs. And, of course, they continue to support our military recruiters across the Commonwealth.

In closing, this past month marked the fifth year that the Corps has been directly involved in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Tremendous accomplishments continue to occur and it is all because our great civilian work force has stepped up and volunteered to serve. I encourage our workforce to support this effort as well as the effort in Afghanistan. Additionally, we need your continued



Col. Dionysios Anninos

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Global War on Terror

Saunders returns after six months in Afghanistan



Johnnie Saunders stands at a project site in Kabul, Afghanistan where he was a construction representative for the Corps. (Photos courtesy Johnnie Saunders)

Story by Patrick Bloodgood

Norfolk District employees have time and time again stepped up to the plate to answer the nation's call to assist in the Global War on Terror. The district currently has two employees deployed to the Middle East and just recently welcomed back Johnnie Saunders from his second six-month deployment.

Saunders was one of two construction representatives who oversaw work at Camp Morehead in the South Region of Kabul, Afghanistan.

"I was working with contractors who were building perimeter fencing and observation towers, as well as entry control points, dining facilities, barracks and other additional buildings," said Saunders.

For Saunders, the return to Afghanistan three years after his first trip was a great time to catch up with some friends.

"I was in the same area that I was three years ago, so I got to see friends that I met back then," said Saunders. "It was great to see how much they have come along in their construction skills and in other areas of their lives."

From his two trips to the Middle Eastern country, Saunders has learned a lot about the citizens of Afghanistan, as well as how we Americans have it compared to them.

"Our quality of life is so much better than most of the world's. You look at the Afghans and even though they are dirt poor and they have lived through civil wars and the Taliban, they are wonderful, kind and generous people," said Saunders.

In addition to his duties as a construction representative, Saunders also helped out in humanitarian efforts by distributing clothes, toys, and food to Afghanistan people, materials which were donated by Americans. He believes that Americans are not getting the total picture of the efforts going on in the war-torn country.

"There are so many human interest stories involving good things that the media just won't report. I wish that the total story was being told," said Saunders.

According to Saunders, this marks his second and last time deploying in support of the Global War on Terror, citing the toll it takes on his family.

"It's a great experience, I wish everybody in the Corps would do it. For me, I am not as young as I once was and I have to watch out for the interests of my family," said Saunders.



Saunders stands with an Afghanistan general.



Wildlife have posh life living atop river bottoms

Story by Brittany Brown

Thousands of birds flock to Hampton Roads each season to nest atop materials dredged from Hampton Roads waterways. To maintain and improve navigation for commercial, national defense and recreational purpose, several hundred million cubic yards of sediment are dredged from local waterways each year to. While dredging projects make life easier for mariners, dredged material put to good use also makes a posh life for the wildlife that flock to the man-made mimic of a natural barrier island. The Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area (CIDMMA) offers a low-cost method to dispose materials while stimulating the ideal conditions for bird species that are endangered, threatened or of special concern.

Ruth A. Beck, a biology professor at the College of William and Mary, monitors the bird population at Craney Island. An ornithologist, Beck began coming to Craney Island in 1961 and has maintained records of her observations that date back to 1974. Once the Endangered Species Act was passed in the 1970's, she encouraged the Corps and William and Mary to work together in the preservation of the birds and their habitat. In 1988, the bird habitat management effort was initiated, which subsequently led to the establishment of an appropriate least tern nesting habitat.

Craney makes for a prime nesting location

Once named Craney Point by the early English settlers who thought cranes inhabited the island, Craney Island was actually inhabited by white and blue herons. Craney is an attractive staging and feeding area for migratory shore birds and waterfowl. Before CIDMMA was built, only straight shoreline existed. The area now offers 2,500 acres of prime waterfront property for birds and is less disturbed than a public beach where the breeding birds normally rest. Thousands of birds migrating up and down the East Coast stop at Craney Island to nest and raise their young.

According to Beck, "During migration, six or seven thousand birds come in on any given night. The Corps produced a mimic of a dynamic barrier island that attracts different species, but mostly water birds, such as terns and gulls. The substrate, habitat and terrain lends itself to birds who will find an abundant amount of food sources here as well."

The least terns have been using the area for nesting for decades. They nest on high areas with fairly flat and sandy soil. The piping plover, which is on the national endangered species list, has not been seen at Craney Island since 1997. Due to the vibrant wildlife, Craney Island has formed its own ecosystem, with a community of feral cats, wild dogs and red foxes, all predators of nesting birds.

"The functional aspect of Craney Island's operation and bird preservation can co-exist," said Beck. "The establishment of Craney Island as a bird habitat has benefited lots of birds. To date, there has been a maximum of 287 pairs of nesting least terns and five pairs of nesting piping plovers."

The dredge placement at Craney Island is regulated by the Corps and monitored by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia



Least tern eggs found on the Norfolk District's Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area. (File Photo)

Marine Resources Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies. The Corps adapts its dredging operations if endangered and threatened species are raising their young or nesting. For non-threatened species, the Corps also tries to accommodate dredge operations to reduce the impact on their habitat.

According to Sam McGee, chief of the Craney Island Project Office, "Nearly 99 percent of wildlife activity here goes on transparent to our daily operations."

In the past, the Norfolk District has received recognition for the creation, protection and preservation of a critical bird habitat. Although Craney Island is not a recreational facility and does not have the traditional resources, it is open for recreational use. Visitor logs track the number of recreational fishermen, crabbers, Audubon Society members and birdwatchers who enjoy the ever-changing and dynamic site. According to 2005 visitor logs, there were 1,530 visitors; 1,315 in 2006; and 1,039 in 2007. The current and future management approach will ensure the use of Craney Island for recreational users, along with avian species that rest atop the dredge materials.

District Tides is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of Army Regulation 360-1. It is published online quarterly for the employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District as well as circulated via print to approximately 130 different stakeholders, customers, partners and elected officials. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. Inquiries, comments and submissions can be sent to, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District, 803 Front Street, Norfolk, Va. 23510 or by e-mail to patrick.j.bloodgood@usace.army.mil. To reach the staff by phone (757) 201-7606.

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Chief makes three day whirlwind tour of district

Story By Patrick Bloodgood

For three days in late February, Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp toured the Norfolk District and many of its projects. The Chief started his three-day trip by flying into Ft. Lee to see first-hand the progress on many Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) projects which the district is constructing.

The Chief of Engineers also attended meetings with the Virginia Port Authority and had a luncheon with young employees in the Norfolk District.

"He talked with us about the internship program and bringing in new people," said Economist Laura Schreiber. "He is really concerned with having a transfer of knowledge from the more experienced employees to the newer employees."

"The general went around the table to greet each attendee, and he quickly encouraged us and motivated us to begin operating from his framework - how the Corps



Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp receives a first hand tour of the new Langley Hospital wing from Project Manager Scott Firman (right).



Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp signs the final steel beam to be placed at the Sustainment Center of Excellence headquarters building in Ft. Lee, Va. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

can go from good to great. He also engaged each individual by getting their thoughts on things such as how their branch or section can be improved," said Public Affairs Specialist Brittany Brown.

The Chief of Engineers addressed the entire district during a town hall meeting, where he handed out awards and discussed his visions on where the Corps was headed and many of the obstacles the organization faces.

As part of his tour, the Chief took a ride on the Corps Vessel Lynnhaven where he was briefed on the oyster restoration project, then ended his visit at Langley Air Force Base where he ate lunch with the Langley Field Office personnel and toured the base's military construction and BRAC projects.

While visiting the district, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp was the

guest speaker at the annual Fort Monroe National Prayer Breakfast, offering words of encouragement and inspiration to community members.

During his remarks, the Chief used an example from his tour during Operation Desert Storm when he and all the leadership of his battalion took their turn washing vehicles in preparation for return to the States. He concluded with the example of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. "If you want to be a leader, grab a towel," said Van Antwerp, quoting a remark made by his former battalion chaplain, Tommy Preston.

Jerry Rogers contributed to this article.



Younger district employees get ready to have lunch with the Chief of Engineers where they discussed different aspects of the future of the Corps.



Native Oysters make major comeback



Oceanographer Dave Schulte prepares to bring aboard a basket teeming with oysters from the Norfolk District's Reef.

Story and photos by Patrick Bloodgood

Beneath the shimmer of a sun-kissed Great Wicomico River lays a large mass of native oysters which has exceeded even the greatest of expectations.

"We've got probably about four times what I was expecting. This is just a great

result," said Army Corps of Engineers Oceanographer Dave Schulte.

These oysters are thriving and growing on a Norfolk District-built reef, as part of the overall Chesapeake Bay Native Oyster Restoration Program. This particular reef project on the Great Wicomico River has produced a level of results that have not been experienced with previous restoration projects, and that is not by happenstance.

"The existing paradigm was not working; the existing method of trying to restore oysters was not working so you have to think differently. You have to think, what else might work, such as alternative reef structures or, in this case, offering a better three-dimensional structure to the oyster so it can build its natural reefs," said Rom Lipcius, a professor with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, a major partner on the oyster restoration project.

"Unlike other reefs that have been built in the bay, we built reefs here that are up to two feet in height, what we call medium-relief reefs. It is on those reefs that we are getting over 1,000 oysters per square meter results. We do not see results this good on the low-relief reefs," said Schulte.

It is through several different factors, including medium-relief reef design, site selection based on historical references, as well as a tributary which is known for its high levels of oyster reproduction, that has yielded this unprecedented amount of oysters in a restoration project. Currently, Schulte estimates that the Corps' reef has 218 million

oysters which is far beyond the four million oysters that were there when the project began.

"The Chesapeake Bay program goal is to increase native oyster biomass 10-fold by 2010, with the baseline being oyster numbers from 1994. Right now we have exceeded that goal by probably about 50 times rather than 10," said Schulte.



Oysters are tightly packed on the district's sanctuary reefs having exceeded by 50 times the project's original oyster restoration biomass goal of a 10-fold increase according to Schulte.

Another benefit that comes with the tightly packed oyster reefs is the formation of an entire eco-system which helps the bay's other marine life.

"We are seeing a lot of this gracilaria (marine algae) growing on the reefs

which is great habitat for blue crabs, so not only are we seeing good growth with the oysters but we are also seeing good habitat for blue crabs and other valuable species," said Lipcius.

Lessons learned applied elsewhere

Out of the lessons learned from the Great Wicomico River, the team has begun work on the Lynnhaven River in Virginia Beach, Va., where they built reefs using fossilized shell

"We have a lot more detailed hydrodynamic information, and have a highly detailed model that we used to place our reefs," said Schulte.

Major concerns about poachers

One thing that does concern the team is that with great success comes a great amount of attention. This could entice watermen to try and harvest oysters from the Corps' reef, which is a protected oyster sanctuary. This sort of poaching could undo everything that the team has achieved so far.

"It is absolutely crucial these reefs be left alone, because if they are harvested, they are going to remove these large animals and smash the reefs flat and pretty much bring us back to square one," said Schulte.

To give the reefs extra protection, Schulte wants to put down obstructions which will damage the equipment that poachers would use to illegally harvest oysters from the Great Wicomico Sanctuary Reefs.

Project shows promise for native oysters

With the outstanding numbers that have been achieved on the Corps' Great Wicomico reefs, researchers believe that

they can replicate this in other trap estuaries which may help to bring about a resurgence in the overall native oyster population.

"In my view it's clear that oysters can be restored. The native oyster can be restored successfully, this shows it," said Lipcius.



Schulte inspects the oysters which were brought to the surface from the district's reef on the Great Wicomico River.



Norfolk District Commodities PRT – All the Right Stuff

Story by Jerry Rogers

Prior to the 2007 hurricane season, the Norfolk District was tasked by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) headquarters, to activate a 32-member Commodities Planning and Response Team (PRT). The Norfolk District Commodities PRT would be one of seven local USACE teams whose mission is to coordinate, receive and deliver bagged ice as well as bottled and bulk water to disaster areas in the United States and its territories for use by the general public and disaster response personnel. The 2007 team would grow four-fold from what was previously an eight-member team.

The Commodities PRT mission is performed under Emergency Support Function #3, Public Works and Engineering. It is part of the National Response Framework, which is an all-hazards plan managed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as lead for emergency management activities.

Mission execution

The commodities mission is carried out at the national and local level. The Southwestern Division has overall management of the mission, with the South Atlantic Division assigned to manage national ice and the North Atlantic Division responsible for national water. Four national teams, two for ice at Charleston and Albuquerque Districts, and two for water at New England and Kansas City Districts, provide procurement of commodities through an Advanced Contracting Initiative (ACI) contract that is negotiated before a disaster occurs to expedite delivery of commodities. Norfolk District is among the seven USACE local teams that would provide state-level support to coordinate the delivery of and to account for commodities that are ordered by the national teams.

Prior to the landfall of a hurricane or predictable event, the DHS-FEMA will preposition commodities at a regional staging area, called a mobilization site, which can serve several state areas. The commodities may come from DHS warehouses or the department may ask the national teams to procure them. These commodities are prepositioned close enough for quick flow into the impacted area once a disaster occurs, but as far away as necessary not to be compromised by the disaster.

The national team will order additional supplies as necessary to keep the proper flow of commodities to the impacted local areas. Some members of the local Commodities PRT will be assigned at a state-level staging site to process incoming commodities for onward movement to points of distribution (POD). A POD is determined by state officials and local commodities team representatives through the state's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The PODs are operated by state personnel and a commodities team member provides instruction on the proper setup and operation of the POD.

As citizens access the commodities at the POD, the local commodities team provides real-time feedback from the POD



Getting palletized bottled water to victims of a disaster is one of the missions the Commodities PRT is tasked with. (File Photo)

to the state EOC regarding the level of usage. This usage level, or burn rate, determines future inflow requirements for the national team.

In a February e-mail to District employees, Norfolk Deputy District Commander, Lt. Col. Michael R. Darrow, thanked the Commodities Team members for “stepping forward and supporting this critical mission.” He also called on other members to “volunteer to build a full bench (Tier 2 and alternate teams) to provide flexibility and depth in the event of a disaster.” As a result, two new members have joined the PRT and they are still looking for more volunteers.

“You get a great amount of satisfaction helping other people out during a time that they are in a less than fortunate situation,” said Commodities PDT leader Gregg Williams.

For more details on the Commodities PRT mission, log onto <https://englink.usace.army.mil/> by entering your User Name and Oracle Password. Members interested in volunteering can also contact Emergency Management Specialist Jan Van Houten of the District Emergency Management Office. Prospective volunteers should first seek their supervisor's approval.

Commander's Corner: moving in harmony

Continued from Page 2

support to ensure our Commodities Team remains trained and ready as we enter into the hurricane season.

A final note on safety. I hope that everyone reads my “GOT RISK” safety messages. They provide great pointers that we often take for granted. We all have a personnel obligation to ensure that NO accidents occur either at work or at home.

Thank you for all you do and all that will be accomplished. BUILDING STRONG IS ARMY STRONG!

Grab your iPods and PDAs; Generation Y is on its way

Recruiting at local colleges and universities is increased as more employees become retirement eligible

Story by Brittany Brown

Norfolk District is facing the need to address looming personnel challenges due to the imminent retirement of a large proportion of its civilian workforce. Out of approximately 420 Norfolk District employees, at least 30 percent will be eligible for retirement within the next few years. To counteract the employees who may be retiring in the upcoming years, a Project Management Plan (PMP) was created to recruit the best talent available from local colleges and universities.

In January, the Integrated Internship Program was established under the leadership of Keith Lockwood. Since then, Project Delivery Team (PDT) members have worked diligently to lay the groundwork for the program. The pre-implementation phase of the internship program has four components: partnerships with local universities, outreach/marketing, manager commitment and mentor involvement.

Fertile recruiting opportunities

Partnerships have been established with local colleges and universities such as Old Dominion University (ODU), Virginia Wesleyan College, Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia. Based on these partnerships, PDT members have maintained communication with faculty and career staff to stay informed of potential opportunities at the district. Since January, PDT members have met dozens of students at co-op, job and internships fairs which produced more than 50 resumes to be added to the pool of qualified applicants.

With the availability of a new Norfolk District pop-up display and newly printed tri-fold brochures, outreach and marketing efforts to local colleges and universities have been successful. While

talking with students at outreach events, PDT members distributed tailored handouts with information about internship program eligibility, salary ranges, benefits, duties for a range of positions and application procedures. In

experience that is directly related to a student's educational program and may offer possible permanent employment upon graduation. STEP provides students with employment opportunities on a part-time basis while school is in session and on a full-time basis during vacation periods. Unlike SCEP, STEP employment opportunities do not have to be related to a student's academic concentration.

Mentor cadre

Mentor involvement is yet another aspect of the Integrated Internship Program. According to the model set forth by Lockwood and the PDT members, mentors will meet with interns on a bi-weekly basis to discuss any questions or career related issues. Mentors will receive feedback

from interns on their experiences and interns will have the opportunity to bond with someone that they can confide in.

Based on the success of the pre-implementation phase of the Integrated Internship Program, the shift to implementation will occur in the upcoming months and managers will be asked to identify their needs for interns. Losing district employees to retirement is an ongoing reality as coworkers leave after decades of service to the Corps.

Veronica McGuire recalls the host of farewell emails from the seven Norfolk District employees who retired in January. McGuire says, "Within one week, we had a handful of individuals who left the district carrying 30-plus years of experience and knowledge with them as they walked out of the door."

The Integrated Internship Program is geared towards the effective recruitment of qualified individuals while preserving organizational knowledge. For more information on student opportunities at Norfolk District, visit www.armyengineersnorfolk.com/student.



The new Norfolk District display has been on the road at co-op, job and internship fairs hosted by local colleges and universities. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

the future, the new NAO display will be complimented with retractable banners that will display the wide variety of disciplines relating to the Corps mission. This addresses PDT members' observations that some students are turned off by the words 'army' and 'engineers'. With the retractable banners, students studying biological sciences, real estate, information technology and business fields will see potential opportunities with the district.

Manager training essential

In February, district managers attended a Café Sup led by Lockwood which introduced them to the Integrated Internship Management Plan. Lockwood provided managers with a comprehensive presentation on the program, which addressed topics such as funding, hiring actions and evaluating interns. Additionally, managers were given information about the two programs that they can hire students under - the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). SCEP is designed to supplement academic studies with work



Military Construction

Fort Monroe Seawall repair tracking ahead of schedule

Story by Jerry Rogers

The Fort Monroe Seawall Repair and Improvement Project, which resumed construction last March, is tracking ahead of the summer 2009 contract completion date and on budget, said Project Manager Greg Hegge of Norfolk District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Contractors work on sand nourishment which will help to dampen the effects of pounding waves during a storm. (Photos by Patrick Bloodgood)



Contractors working for the Corps ensure that there is proper distances and spacing before concrete is poured.

The \$20 million military construction project began in the winter of 2003, immediately following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Isabel, but was suspended by the U.S. Army in July 2005, when Fort Monroe was included in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure legislation. The project was reauthorized by the Office of the Secretary of Defense in November 2006.

The new seawall is being built in front of the existing structure to a uniform 9.5-foot elevation up from its current average 7.5-foot elevation. The project repairs deficiencies and improves flood protection for Fort Monroe from its current 5-year level – a storm that has a 20 percent chance of occurring in any given year – to a 25-year level, a storm that has a four percent chance of occurring in any given year. Hurricane Isabel, which hit the area in 2003, was estimated to be an approximately 40- to 50-year event. Its peak storm surge elevation at nearby Sewells Point was measured at 6.25 feet.



Large dump trucks transport boulders from a drop off site to areas where rock jetties are being constructed to help prevent erosion at the new seawall.



The new seawall measures to a 9.5-foot elevation, two feet more than the existing seawall.



A contractor takes a measurement of unfinished sidewalk before cement is poured into place.

The Seawall project includes a new coated steel sheet-pile seawall, which is 53 percent complete, with a reinforced concrete cap, immediately on the water side of the existing seawall. Additional stone protection is being provided at the toe of the new seawall to protect it from wave erosion. New sidewalks, drainage improvements, an operable flood gate at the Engineer Pier, and other related site work are well under way. The approximately 3,369-foot long seawall will extend from the existing concrete pier west of the Chamberlin Hotel to just beyond the Fishing Pier, located behind Battery Parrott on Fenwick Drive. This project also includes a terminal groin, a coastal engineering structure designed to prevent beach erosion; three breakwaters or jetties; and sand beach nourishment from the Fishing Pier northward for about 1,850 feet.



Large pieces of aggregate are trucked in from a quarry near Richmond, Va., then loaded on dump trucks to be placed on jetties during construction.



Meet the new defenders of the fort

Story and photos by Patrick Bloodgood

Walking around the grounds of Fort Norfolk can be an adventure, not because of its distinguished past, but because of some waterfowl who have taken up residence amongst the cannons and historical buildings. The geese who call Fort Norfolk home have been littering the grounds of the historic fort with their droppings, as well as aggressively chasing employees, making for a rather treacherous walk to and from one's car.

The number of geese has ballooned in recent years to more than 40 fine feathered friends, according to some accounts.

"We tried everything to get the geese to go somewhere else but nothing worked," said Waterfield Building Facilities Manager Glenn Seay.



Kay the border collie keeps a watchful eye on two geese as they attempt to gain access to the Fort Norfolk grounds.



Kay and Pride keep watch over the grounds of the district.

Seay's main concern was the hazards that the geese were posing to the health and welfare of the employees who work in and around the Waterfield Building. According to a report by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, geese excrement contains bacteria which can cause E. Coli, as well as parasites which may cause human health problems.

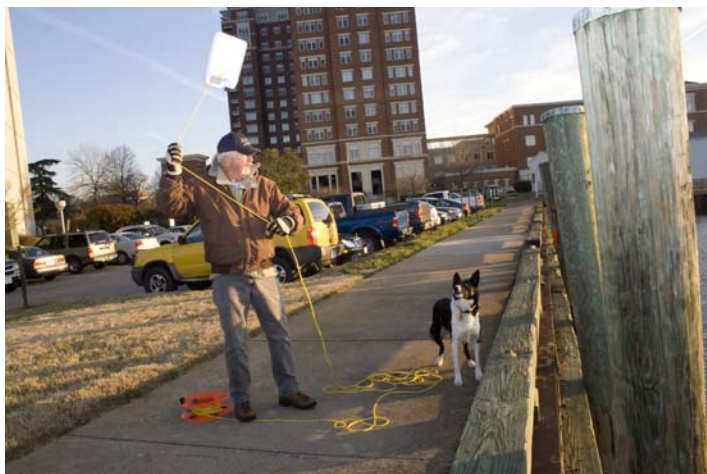
Frustrated by the lack of success in managing the geese population, Seay turned to the internet for a solution. He began reading up on the effectiveness of border collies in keeping geese away from airports and golf courses, and wondered if it would be a viable solution for the district.

On March 3, Pride and Kay, border collies from WindChazer Inc., along with their handler Richard Ludwig, began patrolling the grounds to keep the birds away. They're trained not to harm the birds or the feral cats which inhabit the fort.

"The goal is to frustrate the birds, so that they want to go somewhere else to make their nests and lay their eggs," says Ludwig as he watched his two canines patrol the waters.

It seems easy enough, but according to Ludwig the birds are very smart and it takes a little time to make that happen, especially if they have been coming to the same spot for years, as is the case with the Norfolk District. The two friendly collies will be around the district periodically to ensure that the geese don't become too comfortable. For Seay and many other employees, this is a promising notion, one that means they don't have to perform an acrobatic act as they try to avoid stepping on goose pooh.

Handler Richard Ludwig flings a plastic bottle tied to a rope into the river to help keep the geese away as border collie Pride looks on.

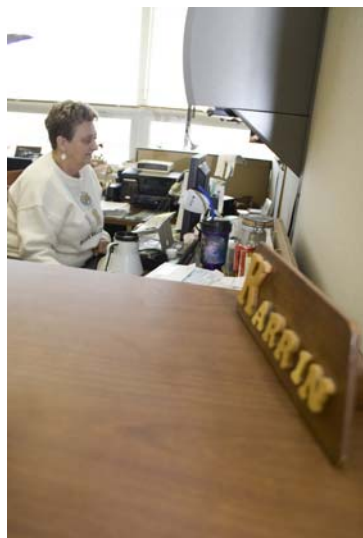


Tides' spotlight on district employees

Here's looking at you kid!

A handful of employees keep Craney going

Story and photos by Patrick Bloodgood



Karrin Frankie runs the front office and is the first person visitors see when they come to the facility.

Situated a few miles down the Elizabeth River from the Waterfield Building, where the river converges with the James River, is the Norfolk District's Craney Island Dredge Material Management Area. A core group of dedicated Corps employees operate the field office, overseeing daily operations of the complex. These employees include a field office supervisor, an administrative assistant who is nicknamed "Motorcycle Mama," three engineer equipment operators, a mechanic and a civil engineering technician.

Motorcycles, Fishermen and Craney

When you first step into the facility's office you find yourself face-to-face with probably the most colorful character working at Craney Island. Meet Karrin Frankie, a self-proclaimed biker babe whose nickname of "Motorcycle Mama" was given to her by a fellow district employee. This bike-riding, fun-loving senior is a member of, as she puts it, biker gang. Actually this so-called biker gang is the Gold Wing Road Riders Association and its membership consists of those who ride and co-ride the luxury Gold Wing Motorcycle.

"I have over 200,000 co-riding miles under my belt and have seen as far north as Canada and as far west as Dallas, Texas, while riding with my significant other," said Frankie. "We love it because people come up and talk to us and it is really just a great way to meet people."

The Newport News, Va., native says she loves it at Craney Island, not only because of the people she works with, but also with the people she sees stop by.

"I love it here, we have bird watchers, and fishermen and because I am the first person they see, I have become a member of the Hampton Roads Bird Watchers Club," said Frankie.

Craney's change and memorable moments through the eyes of employees

For Frankie, as with the rest of the team, while working at the facility they have seen a dramatic shift in the duties they performed over the years.

"A lot of change in our whole mission has occurred since I started. We went from handling the bulk of the big projects to

managing mosquitoes, grading roads, erosion control and letting contractors do the big projects," said Engineering Equipment Operator Bernard Jackson a 15-year Craney Island veteran.

Carlos Quinones, a seven-year veteran of the Island, says that he has seen Craney Island change, not only in how operations are performed, but in how the facility actually appears.

"The landscape has changed dramatically. The Phragmites were so huge you couldn't even see the water, but since we started to steadily improve the methods and procedures here to make us more efficient and environmentally sensitive, the Phragmites has been removed. And a majority of the mosquito population has been put under control," said Quinones.

For Jackson, who serves as the union representative for Craney Island, the changes that have occurred over his time have been for the better. He thinks that his most memorable moment would be when a dead whale was dragged to shore and buried on the property after a necropsy was performed.

"It stopped Craney Island for about two full days and oh, the smell," Jackson said as he contorted his face in disgust.

The dead whale also registered as a memorable moment for Wilroy Pretlow, a seven-year employee at Craney Island, who says he is



District employees David Howard (blue plaid shirt) and Bernard Jackson (blue coveralls) assist members of the Coast Guard to tie off the dead whale which was buried at the facility in 2007.

amazed at how Craney's operations works with dredged material being pumped in and clean water running out the other side.

Pretlow came to the district from Ft. Monroe. At one time in his life he was an excellent baseball player who made the All-Army baseball team only to find out a couple of weeks later he would be

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A quick update on the district's vision

In May 2007, Norfolk District employees were given a task based on the District's eight Lines of Operations: Global War on Terrorism; Emergency Support & Response; Military Construction; Centers of Standardization; Civil Works; Operations and Maintenance; Regulatory and Environmental Restoration; and Real Estate. The task was to establish objectives using our goals of Caring for Our People; Exceeding Customer Expectations; and a Diverse, Stable, and Capable Program. Project Delivery Teams (PDTs) were developed and the District Vision Teams proposed 51 actionable items as a result. Many employees are curious regarding what has transpired from all the great work done last summer...

The good news is that a number of these items have already been accomplished. These include: Improve Building Aesthetics (new conference room furniture and side chairs); shortening Town Hall Meetings; Expanded Fitness Opportunities; Command and Staff slides available on SharePoint, and a new and improved District display for use at outreach events and career fairs just to name a few.

Several items are currently ongoing and include: Establishment of a mentoring program, commander listening sessions throughout

the District branches, increased use of SharePoint, and continued improvement of conference rooms with painting and new pictures.

Several of the remaining open items were packaged together into larger items that will be pursued during the remaining fiscal year. One key focus area is the implementation of a "Workforce Life Cycle Model" to develop systems and processes covering an employee's development from recruitment through retirement. Additionally, the district will continue to move forward on increased quality of life improvements and expanded use of SharePoint.

Remaining actionable items developed by the Vision Teams will be forwarded to the Command and Staff group this month for execution. The District Commander plans to meet with the Vision Teams again to hold discussions regarding the actionable items to ensure the original visions are not lost. Key to implementation is the continued participation of Vision Team members. Updates regarding the action items will be provided monthly once the Command and Staff begins execution.



Craney Island crew remembers, look toward future

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sent to Vietnam. He was told he couldn't play because he was drafted rather than having joined the regular army voluntarily.

During his tenure at the facility Quinones says that he is amazed with some of the items that the dredge's pick up.

"We have found cannonballs from the Civil War era, as well as arrowheads and such. It is really interesting to see what turns up," said Quinones.

Mosquitoes —public enemy number one

Before the district took a more active role in controlling the mosquito population at

Craney Island, many of the workers can remember what it was like to leave the building and get eaten alive by the blood-sucking insects.

"The mosquitoes were out of control, you had to fight them just to put up the flag, but since we started spraying and using other control methods there has been a big improvement," said Pretlow.

"Since we started the mosquito control we have had a very successful program. We have worked with the city of Portsmouth and the Navy to make sure that we are doing the best possible job," said Facilities Manager Sam McGee.

A dedicated group

According to McGee, everybody but two employees working at Craney Island are retirement-eligible. Out of those, only one person is truly talking about going through with it in the near future.

"I want to retire this year if I can. If it [Craney Island] was in Newport News, I wouldn't retire. I just live too far away," said Frankie.

"They [employees] are all here by choice, and that says something about their dedication," said McGee.

Postal Service has bigger box, offers military discount



(Postal Service Press Release) - The U.S. Postal Service recently announced that it has a bigger flat-rate box and now offers a military discount for those mailing to APO and FPO addresses.

Regardless of how much they weigh, the boxes will cost \$12.95 to mail for the general public, and \$10.95 if mailed to an APO or FPO address, postal officials said. The boxes themselves are free.

The new flat-rate box as well as the new mailing rates went into effect March 3. For more information, visit <http://www.usps.com>.

ACE/IT News

Who to go to for IM/IT services and products

With the transition to the new national Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) service provider, Army Corps of Engineers-Information Technology (ACE-IT), on May 15 some things will change regarding how employees request and receive IM/IT products and services. In the weeks ahead, more information regarding these changes will be provided. In the meantime, employees need to be aware of two key “go-to” people responsible for ensuring customers receive the IM/IT services, products, and support they need—when they need them.

The Regional Information Officer (RIO), Deborah Kennedy, is the senior IT employee for the Norfolk District, and reports to the USACE Chief Information Officer. She advises the district commander, senior staff and employees on information management matters. As a member of the district command and staff, she works closely with all program managers to stay current on the district’s emerging missions and projects.

As the district mission and workload changes, Kennedy assists program managers in defining new IM/IT requirements, and works closely with ACE-IT to determine the most effective way to satisfy those requirements. In addition to determining how to satisfy changing needs and requirements, the RIO monitors and assesses the national IM/IT service provider, ACE-IT, to ensure performance and quality of service meets or exceeds service level agreements.

Kennedy works with functional and project managers in strategic planning, coordinating projects and programs, organizing studies, assisting in budget planning and execution as well as policy development and implementation.

Another key “go-to” person in the IM service and support arena is the Customer Relationship Manager (CRM), Melinda Worrell.

As an ACE-IT employee, Worrell works side-by-side with the RIO in ensuring district customers receive the IM/IT services, products, and support they need. Worrell is the person to see for customer concerns and complaints as they relate to day-to-day operations.



Deborah Kennedy (right) and Melinda Worrell are at the district to ensure employees receive the proper service from ACE-IT. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

In addition to the customer support that Worrell will give to employees, her roll as CRM also makes her the ACE-IT site liaison, who facilitates understanding of site day-to-day operational needs to ACE-IT management as well as assuring local ACE-IT staff are properly engaged and performing according to agreed-upon standards in all IM/IT mission areas. The CRM is responsible to assure local operational staffing needs are met and to assist the regional ACE-IT quality management and

transformation management officials in successfully achieving their respective missions locally. Worrell is the on-site person who is most familiar with ACE-IT processes and assists customers in effectively requesting ACE-IT products and services.

The CRM interfaces with the RIO to determine whether identified issues are the result of process deficiencies or merely one-time aberrations. CRMs also partner with RIOs to translate new customer requirements gathered by the RIOs into potential solutions. In summary, CRMs serve as the local “eyes and ears” of the ACE-IT organization and do whatever is necessary to ensure ACE-IT delivers the quality of products and services identified in the performance work statement and service level agreements.

As a team, The RIO and CRM share some common duties — both are change agents in support of the ongoing cultural and technical transformations, and are responsible to meet the mission of the local commander, as well as work to ensure that customer requirements are being met.

Brambleton Ave to undergo new traffic pattern

The city of Norfolk’s contractor has been working on the Brambleton Avenue bridge lanes and roadway for the past several months. This work is finishing up and they are tentatively planning to switching traffic to the next phase of construction on Sunday, March 16.

This phase will open the curb lane and middle lane of both the eastbound and westbound lanes, closing the median lanes in each direction. This will allow the contractor to complete the median work on the bridge.

This work should take approximately a month to complete, at which point Virginia Power will have to close the curb-lane of the eastbound lanes to install and energize the street light poles for that side of the bridge.

Keep a watchful eye on the traffic and informational signs when driving on Brambleton Avenue.